

R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 020 923

TE 000 517

CENSORSHIP OF LIBRARY BOOKS AND TEXTBOOKS IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS.

BY- BACK, HARRY

PUB DATE JAN 65

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.25 HC NOT AVAILABLE FROM EDRS. 14P.

DESCRIPTORS- *ENGLISH INSTRUCTION, *CENSORSHIP, *SCHOOL LIBRARIES, *TEXTBOOKS, *SCHOOL POLICY, PUBLIC LIBRARIES, LIBRARY MATERIALS, TEXTBOOK BIAS, TEXTBOOK PUBLICATIONS, TEXTBOOK EVALUATION, LIBRARIANS, STATE LEGISLATION, SOCIAL VALUES, COMMUNITY INFLUENCES, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, FREEDOM ORGANIZATIONS, LIBRARY MATERIAL SELECTION, SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP,

LIBRARIANS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS MUST LEARN TO UNDERSTAND CENSORSHIP ATTEMPTS AND THE METHODS OF OPPOSING THEM. CENSORSHIP GROUPS, THROUGH LIMITING ACCESS TO PARTICULAR WORKS, AIM AT UPHOLDING WHAT THEY FEEL ARE THE TRUE AMERICAN VALUES. THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF CENSORSHIP IS UNCERTAIN, AND THE PREMISE UNDERLYING LEGAL CENSORSHIP--THAT READING CERTAIN MATERIALS DIVERSELY AFFECTS SOCIAL BEHAVIOR--HAS NOT BEEN EMPIRICALLY TESTED. IF THE PREMISE IS TRUE, ONLY COURTS HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO REGULATE THE DANGER. UNOFFICIAL CENSORSHIP, CARRIED OUT THROUGH INTIMIDATION BY PRESSURE GROUPS, MUST BE OPPOSED WITH DOCUMENTS IN INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND WITH ANTI-CENSORSHIP TECHNIQUES BY SCHOOL OFFICIALS. TWO EFFECTIVE DOCUMENTS ARE THE ALA'S "LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS" AND THE "FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT" OF THE ALA AND THE AMERICAN BOOK PUBLISHERS COUNCIL. TECHNIQUES OF OPPOSING CENSORSHIP ARE DESCRIBED IN ALA'S "HOW LIBRARIES AND SCHOOLS CAN RESIST CENSORSHIP." (THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN "JOURNAL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION," VOL. 40 (JANUARY 1965), 3-15.) (LH)

JOURNAL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

JANUARY, 1965 — VOL. 40, NO. 1

contents

ED020923

TE 000 517

- | | | |
|--|----|---|
| HARRY BACH | 3 | <i>Censorship of Library Books and Textbooks in American Schools, 1953-1963</i> |
| JOHN F. OHLES | 16 | <i>The Mechanics of Discussion</i> |
| ESTHER O. CARSON | 19 | <i>Jobs Held by Educable Mentally Retarded High School Graduates</i> |
| R. A. DUFRESNE | 22 | <i>Perspective on the Dropout Problem — The Stay-Ins</i> |
| PETER A. SODERBERGH | 25 | <i>The Vintage Motion Picture and The Social Studies Teacher</i> |
| ANTHONY SAVILLE AND
DAVID RANDAL BEST | 34 | <i>Implementing Modern Mathematics Programs in Selected California Schools</i> |
| OSCAR T. JARVIS | 40 | <i>The Racial Issue and the Educator</i> |
| FLOYD R. HONN | 44 | <i>What's Happening?</i> |
| Art Credits | | Malcolm Smith |

The JOURNAL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION is owned and published by the California Association of Secondary School Administrators. Managing Editor, William N. McGowan, 1705 Murchison Drive, Burlingame, California. The JOURNAL is issued eight months during the year in the calendar months of October to May, inclusive. Subscription is \$5.00 per year; single copies, current school year, 70 cents; single copies, prior to current year, \$1.00. Annual subscription in all countries in the International Postal Union, \$5.50. Second-class postage paid at Burlingame, California. Address all correspondence to JOURNAL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION, 1705 Murchison Drive, Burlingame, California. To purchase microfilm volumes, write University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

© 1965 by California Association of Secondary School Administrators, 1705 Murchison Drive, Burlingame, California. Printed in the U.S.A.

Censorship of Library Books and Textbooks in American Schools

HARRY BACH

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This article, considerably longer than those generally accepted for publication, has been published in its entirety because of its thoughtful development and well-documented treatment of a theme that should be of critical interest to every educator and citizen dedicated to a perpetuation of American ideals and the American way of life.)

On January 9, 1963 the Lowndes County, Georgia, school board banned John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* from all libraries in the county school system. The novel was described as "vulgar trash" by objecting parents. Members of the school board admitted they had not read the book.¹

In 1963 a bill was introduced in the Texas House of Representatives, H.B. 852, which would penalize public school librarians who deposit in their libraries literature containing language which in the local school board's opinion could be considered to be obscene.²

At El Segundo High School, California, some two years ago, *The Reporter* and *The New Republic* were suspended from classroom use and six social studies teachers were reprimanded by school district trustees for publicly protesting administrative practices. The school board ruled that the two magazines would be kept in the school library for use only by those students who had a teacher's permission to do so. Board President Charles Schumann chastised the teachers for raising the question of book-banning which he claimed "subjected the community and board to ridicule and criticism."³

Charges of communist subversion in the Los Angeles school curriculum were made to the Board of Education on October 29, 1962 by Mrs. Lucinda Bengé,



who cited six social science textbooks as containing planned communist subversion. The board asked Superintendent Jack P. Crowther to evaluate the charges and report later. Books in question were the *Real People Series* used in 7th grade; the *Present in Perspective* and *Background of World Affairs* used in 12th grade; *Documents of American History* and *Heritage of America* used in the 11th grade.⁴

~~~~~  
HARRY BACH is Librarian at Riverside City College, Riverside, California.  
~~~~~

In November, 1961 two citizens of Meriden, Connecticut, named Casy and Dobson charged that the city's two high schools were brainwashing the students. They stated in their report that after careful examination of the social science texts they reached the conclusion that Meriden parents were indeed financing the subversion of their own children in their own public schools. The report defined subversion as anything tending to undermine "faith and allegiance". The two critics objected to such subtitles in books as "Industrialization Brings Problems as well as Benefits"; and "Congress Attempts to Curb the Trusts." They found fault with books and articles by novelist Pearl Buck because Miss Buck, they said, in 1941 had appealed for help "on behalf of the Russian peoples." Fortunately, a vigilant press and education officials took a strong stand and were able to silence the censors before the latter's ardor reached the book-burning stage.⁵

ARE the above accounts isolated incidents? Evidently not. According to Nelson's *The Censors and the Schools*, from the early part of 1957 until the end of 1962, textbooks came under fire in nearly a third of the legislatures in states as far apart as California, Illinois, Texas and Florida.⁵

In California in 1957 State Senator Hugh P. Donnelly introduced a bill to prohibit the use of schoolbooks judged at variance with "morality, truth, justice or patriotism." Donnelly's colleagues in the legislature, however, wondering just who would pass on all those virtues, killed the bill in committee.⁵

The Texas legislature in 1962 established a textbook investigating committee. The duty of the committee of five was to hold public hearings on charges that books now used, or planned for future use in the state schools are subversive. The resolution which established the committee was somewhat vague: "The House expresses its desire that the American history course in the public schools emphasize in the textbooks our glowing and throbbing history of hearts and souls inspired by wonderful principles and traditions." Following were some of the demands from the right:

Banish books that describe the United States as a democracy rather than a republic

Remove books with favorable descriptions of the New Deal, the United Nations, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and federal aid to just about anything

That Webster's *New World Dictionary* not be used because its definition of communism does not call it "a world menace"

Remove the name of Albert Einstein from textbooks

Eliminate those books which "glorify" government control of economy and use only those which praise the virtues of capitalism

Protest books which give "casual" treatment to Douglas MacArthur or contain too little material on Nathan Hale, Patrick Henry and David Crockett

Oppose books which refer students to books of Eugene O'Neill, Pearl Buck, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser and historians Charles A.

Beard, Henry S. Commager and Bernard De Voto³

The extreme expression of distrust was perhaps reached by the Alabama legislature in 1953 when it passed a bill prohibiting the use of any textbooks unless the authors, contributors, or authors cited were certified by the publishers as having no communist affiliations. The act, however, was declared unconstitutional one year later.⁵

Censorship of books is no new phenomenon in American society, or any society for that matter. As Blanshard points out, every group in a nation which has strong convictions concerning the subject matter taught in public classrooms wants to use the schools to indoctrinate the children with those convictions. In one generation it is the slavocracy of the South that insists on indoctrinating Southern children with a flattering representation of slavery and "Southern values"; in the next it is the orthodox leaders of Christian fundamentalism who would eliminate the "heresy" of evolution. Then it is the turn of the anti-British segments to have their day. In the 1920's, socialism was a subject to be omitted from history textbooks altogether. At the same time, however, public utility corporations of the country initiated a drive to rewrite textbooks in such a way that children would appreciate the philosophy of American private enterprise.⁶

Perhaps it might be well at this stage to examine more closely the meaning and nature of censorship. According to Gellhorn, censorship embraces group activity aimed at eliminating particular works or kinds of works, or limiting their availability after publication.⁷ He goes on further to make a distinction between

official censorship and unofficial censorship. The former based on law or administrative regulation, usually observes the forms of legal procedures, though its permissible content has sometimes been defined so vaguely that the attendant procedures have given little real protection; the latter derives its force not from legal mechanisms, but, at its best, from persuasion and, at its worst, from implacable economic or political pressure abetted by misuse of police authority. Censorship, says Gellhorn, rests in one or another degree upon the belief that those who are qualified to identify evil and mistake should be empowered to prevent their dissemination. The censors, of course, fail to realize that if choice is foreclosed by another's judgment about what is virtuous or wise, freedom is lost. More importantly, the chances of discovering what really is virtuous or wise diminish when experimentation and disagreement are impossible.⁷ John Stuart Mill in his *On Liberty* observes: "All silencing of discussion is an assumption of infallibility. While everyone well knows himself to be fallible, few think it necessary to take any precautions against their own fallibility, or admit the supposition that any opinion of which they feel very certain, may be one of the examples of the error to which they acknowledge themselves to be liable."⁸

To restate the above in different terms: Censorship, in one view, aims at reserving freedom (in the United States, at least) through reinforcing what its proponents regard as the true values and beliefs. Opposition to censorship, in the

other view, does not derive from hostility to the virtues the pro-censors cherish, but reflects rather, a conviction that in the end the values of a free society will be attained through freedom rather than repression. The advocates of censorship, in other words, regard it as a means by which to prevent debasement of the individual virtues, the cultural standards, and the common security of democracy. Its opponents regard it, by contrast, as a danger to the freedom which fosters those virtues and standards, and without which democracy cannot survive.⁷

FROM the legal point of view Justice Black finds censorship of any kind unconstitutional according to the First Amendment's clear statement, "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press." If curbs are placed on freedom of the press, these curbs must be based on a clear and present danger of a substantive evil from the publications. Only the courts and not private literature reviewing organizations are the proper tribunals for determining the existence of such danger. In this connection Federal Judge Ernest Tolin, faced with the perplexing question of what constitutes obscenity, discovered fourteen different judicial definitions of the term.⁸ Obviously few people can agree upon its essential nature. In any event, says Justice Tobriner of the California Supreme Court, "a legal prescription cannot constrict artistic creation. Man's drive for self-expression which over the centuries has built his monuments, does not stay within set bounds; the creations which yesterday were the detested and obscene become the classics of today."⁹

"We can be pretty sure", adds Everett Moore, 1964 President of the California Library Association, "that even the most hated and feared book of any age will not evoke the same hatred and fear in another time."¹⁰

The premises underlying legal censorship — that curbs placed on freedom of the press must be based on a clear and present danger of a substantive evil from the publications — have never been fully tested by empirical research. Hence it cannot be unequivocally demonstrated that books do not promote juvenile delinquency, sexual perversion, sadism and the other evils the censors fear will flow from reading. Such objective evidence as does exist, does not sustain the fear. So far as disclosed by the most exhaustive study of juvenile delinquency yet made in America, reading seems to be of small moment in shaping antisocial tendencies. According to George W. Smyth, for many years one of the nation's outstanding children's court judges, reading difficulty was among the 878 causative factors that had had effect upon the troubled children before him; reading, no matter of what, found not a single place in his list. Reading, like other environmental factors, may modify an individual's personality predispositions, though unlikely in itself to make a "bad" man out of a previously "good" one.⁷ As Gellhorn points out, unless all children are to be wrapped in cotton batting and utterly removed from the world, we cannot hope to immunize every one of them against contact with something that might conceivably energize his savage side.⁷ Even if it be true that reading matter may activate the impulses of some twisted individual, can this possibility justify repressive policies

that affect all alike? Could anyone imagine a convict being led into the gas chamber turning to the attendants — or, who knows, a national T.V. audience — to say: I am going where I am going because I have read *Catcher in the Rye*?!

Incidentally, while parents, educators, organized groups, etc., may be alarmed lest a few words found in certain recent novels corrupt American children, they seem to show much less concern when every day, right under their noses, they witness whole industries — fashion and advertising, perfume and cosmetics — work very hard at stimulating sexual desires! Furthermore, if we wish to prevent the deterioration of our young people's morals, perhaps we should abolish the draft and also the armed forces! From one or two GI bull sessions the uninitiated will probably "learn" more than from the complete works of a Henry Miller! This is not to say, of course, that an 8th grader should be assigned to report on the *Tropic of Cancer*. It is to say, however, that the matter of reading assignments should be left to the instructor's good judgment and the librarian's policy of adding books to his collection that will enrich the quality of thought and expression. *Tropic of Cancer* could conceivably become suggested or assigned reading in an advanced American literature course for the gifted at the senior level, if the instructor holds the conviction that the book is good literature which will benefit the serious student and can present it as such to his class.

Censorship, like other forms of activity, has always flared most dangerously in times of heightened uneasiness, tension, and frustration, when people reach out for apparently easy solutions to complex

problems, flail the handiest strawman, and burn in effigy the most visible or vulnerable enemy.¹¹

Since the end of the Second World War, many people in the United States have been uneasy over the revolutionary changes occurring in the world, especially the growth in the power of the Soviet Union and the consequent tensions of the Cold War. At home, they are attempting to deal with the great social problems of racial integration and accelerated urbanization, with all their dislocating effects. Both challenges, external and internal, have aroused passions and anxieties, and fostered unreasoning violence.¹¹

CENSORSHIP, therefore, has been held out as a convenient and simple weapon readily available to people who feel deprived of an effective voice through democratic means, a club with which to defend and enforce their own views on public issues, a means of destroying liberty in the name of liberty. It seems, to many, so easy: the removal of "subversive" books from the library is a blow against the international Communist conspiracy, removal of "obscene" books from book shelves will put an end to juvenile delinquency. In this perspective, "undermining the morals of youth" becomes part of the Communist plot against America; the loyalty of librarians, teachers and authors is suspect; and publishers are either "agents of the Kremlin," "purveyors of filth for profit," or ironically both. The temptation to take unilateral, authoritarian counteraction, especially on the part of people impatient with legal procedures and court decisions, becomes

strong; and books, because they have never been more accessible, and because they are feared as well as respected, become the victims.¹¹

In a democracy, all naturally have the right to voice their opinion, to criticize a book or anything else, if they so desire. Textbooks cannot be above the judgment of the community; admittedly, the more criticism there is, the better. But criticism should be honest and informed. According to Blanshard, however, most agitators who have been making trouble for local school boards have not been independent citizens expressing their own convictions but mouthpieces of a reactionary movement against public education.⁸ These vocal minority groups seem to regard as treason any slight suggestion that the United States was ever in the wrong or that there is anything about it that could be improved. They are evidently ignorant of the fact that what improvement there has been in the American textbook in the past quarter century has been primarily in response to professional criticism rather than pressure groups.

Brainwashing in the High Schools, by E. Merrill Root, billed as an objective analysis of eleven American history textbooks paralleling the Communist line, published in 1958, seems to be the bible of these ultra-conservative groups. It catapulted Root into the forefront of the assault on public education. The main thesis of the book is that the United States is losing the Cold War and that the blame rests with history textbooks which "brainwashed" students by distorting the truth and indoctrinating them with collectivist ideas!¹⁵ The Daughters of the American Revolution also have been joining the battle against subversive text-

books. Of two hundred and fourteen titles examined by them, only fifteen met their minimum standards. The D.A.R. unearthed what they considered subversion even in books on music, geography, arithmetic and biology. In music, for instance, they found too many work tunes and folk songs, as distinguished from native and national airs. Many books were pronounced "guilty of special pleading from the liberals and internationalists" because writings by people such as Ruth Benedict, Theodore H. White, Alan Lomax, Langston Hughes, Margaret Mead, Louis Untermeyer, Bill Mauldin, etc., were listed for supplementary study.⁵

IN 1958, an organization called "America's Future" launched its "Operation-Textbook." According to Rudolf K. Scott, president: "No American textbook publishers have stooped to subversion. There is no evidence of that and I don't like extremism. The whole thing of liberalism in the textbooks has been an evolution, taking place over the past decade or two. But we are going to change that. We have already had some influence and we ultimately will exercise a very considerable force in textbook publishing. Publishers have had a free hand too long. There were no qualified persons criticizing them. Now we are hurting the publisher where it hurts — in his pocket-book." By late 1962 "America's Future" had mailed out thousands of copies of reviews of more than two hundred high school texts. The reviews went to educators, school board members, and numerous organizations dedicated to censoring subversion from texts. The same theme

runs through all of these reviews: protests against material on the income tax, Social Security, T.V.A., liberal authors, labor unions, the United Nations, Democratic presidents, etc.⁵

APPROXIMATELY a year ago, Edwin Castagna, a well-known American librarian, attributed the following characteristics and forms of behavior to reactionary censors:

1. A threatening attitude
2. A belief in personal superiority, a conviction others would be gravely injured by what he wants to suppress
3. An absolute lack of a sense of humor. To the censor a witticism is an indication of treason!
4. A tendency to making the part stand for the whole and making it seem that incidental factors are true for the whole book

5. Lack of knowledge
Censors, he says, often are incredibly ignorant, without the slightest understanding of the creative mind

6. No understanding of history, a lack of realization that their game is one of the oldest and most unsuccessful in the world, that about every classic including Homer, Socrates, the Greek dramatists, the Bible, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, at one time or another, have been expurgated, mutilated, suppressed and censored

7. Absence of belief in freedom of expression

8. A tendency to bypass and disregard well-established policies and procedures, an unwillingness to be con-

fronted with obstacles in the way of policies, regulations and well-established practices¹²

However, it must be noted that the superpatriots are not the only censors. There are many conscientious, honest decent parents and citizens who are concerned too. They are wondering what is happening and if they can be certain that the charges are based on fact. In her now famous *Book Selection and Censorship Study*, Marjorie Fiske brought also forth the shocking fact of widespread self-censorship among California librarians and school administrators.¹³ Evidently, the existence of extremist groups and a press campaigning against certain books and authors have resulted in a marked effect on school administrators and librarians, who, in order to avoid controversy, have been seeing to it that there is nothing on their library shelves to complain about. Fiske found that two-thirds of the school personnel reporting "no complaints" from book users had restrictive attitudes toward book selection. Nearly one-half of the librarians interviewed in the study expressed unequivocal "freedom to read" convictions. In actual practice, however, as stated above, two-thirds of those who had a say in book selection reported instances where the controversiality of a book or an author resulted in a decision not to buy. One-fifth habitually avoided buying any material which was known to be controversial or which they believed might become the subject of controversy. Librarians also listed reasons widely acknowledged as legitimate (such as reading level and the necessity to supplement the curriculum) for avoiding material. A school librarian working in a metropolitan system, according to Fiske,

was not as likely to order controversial material as a school librarian in a smaller city. Not size of city itself but degree of bureaucratization seemed to be the decisive factor. Books complained about, Fiske further reported, were placed on restricted shelves. School librarians, the study revealed, felt like second-class members of their own profession and like second-class members of their own faculties. Thus a feeling of defensiveness on their part, in many cases, led to capitulation to pressures. Librarians and school administrators would do well, therefore, to remember Thomas Braden's words that the trouble with censorship is that there is never a logical place to stop. "If you ban one book", Mr. Braden says, "equally good reasons can be provided for banning another. If you ban a book on moral grounds, then why not on political grounds? If one citizen's complaint that a book is objectionable is satisfied by removing it, then it is fair to satisfy other citizens who may find other books equally objectionable. Censorship is a seamless web."¹⁴

WHAT are some of the effects of censorship in addition to intimidating teachers, school officials and librarians and creating a climate of fear? Nelson claims that no state escapes the effects of the attacks on textbooks. Book censors in one state, he says, will force a publisher to alter a textbook and that book is sold, as altered, in other states.⁵ But more important perhaps is the impact the widespread attacks have on textbook publishers, who are highly competitive. Publishers themselves acknowledge they must

walk a narrow path to avoid controversy and offending any special interest groups. As a result, writes A. Alexander, a textbook analyst of the Board of Education of the City of New York: "Many of the textbooks are strangely dull, lifeless, and bear a striking resemblance to each other. Critical of neither the past nor the present, they encourage little respect for the historian's craft . . . they betray a basic lack of confidence in presenting this country full face because some of the warts may show. Many books present few or no serious problems."¹⁵ Henry S. Commager, who agreed with this appraisal, added: "The whole purpose seems to be to take out any ideas to which anybody might object and to balance all sections and interests."¹⁶ Textbooks and library books that avoid offending various interests and levels of authority and legitimate and not-so-legitimate pressure groups eliminate the discussion of controversial issues. (In one case, a publisher deleted an entire chapter on the United Nations from an eighth-grade civics book.) By omitting or glossing over controversial issues, Krug asserts, textbooks fail to provide students with opportunities for critical thinking, for gaining insight into historical or civic problems, for learning the skills needed for problem solving, which alone can prepare young people for the intelligent choice making required of citizens in a democracy. It is democracy itself, at its center, which is strengthened whenever a free choice of books is made available to the student population.¹⁷

Librarians, more and more, when under attack, have been falling back on two basic documents: the *Library Bill of Rights* adopted June 18, 1948 and amended February 1, 1961 by the Coun-

cil of the American Library Association¹⁸ and the *Freedom to Read Statement* prepared by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, May 2-3, 1953.¹⁹ The former has been called a magnificent charter of literary freedom for American libraries. It has been used very effectively against censorship clagues in a number of cities. One of its primary principles is that "in no case should any book be excluded because of the race or nationality, or the political or the religious views of the writer." It goes on to say:

"There should be the fullest practicable provision of material presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times, international, national and local; and books or other reading matter of sound factual authority should not be proscribed or removed from library shelves because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

"Censorship of books, urged or practiced by volunteer arbiters of morals or political opinion or by organizations that would establish a coercive concept of Americanism, must be challenged by libraries in maintenance of their responsibility to provide public information and enlightenment through the printed word. . . . A book should be judged as a book. No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators."¹⁸

The *Freedom to Read Statement*, among many other things, declares:

"We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures towards conformity present the danger of limit-

ing the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. . . . The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free man will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

"WE therefore affirm these propositions:

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority

2. Publishers and librarians do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral or aesthetic views as the sole standard for determining what books should be published or circulated

3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book solely on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author

4. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any book the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or author as subversive or dangerous

5. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by

individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large

6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, bookmen can demonstrate that the answer to a bad book is a good one, the answer to a bad idea is a good one."¹⁹

INTO these ringing declarations, Ervin J. Gaines, a librarian with a column on intellectual freedom in the *ALA Bulletin* injects a note of caution. Would-be censors, he says, are not interested, it seems, in the academic niceties of a free press. Rightly or wrongly, they are alarmed by a tendency toward immorality that frightens them. Like frightened men they react with force.²⁰ Nelson in his book quotes William E. Spaulding, former president of the American Textbook Publishers Institute as saying: "There is nothing to be gained by blaming the present situation on the small but highly organized group of professional agitators who have sold a phony bill of goods to the American public. Lash back at them as hard as you please, but the fact will remain that for lack of understanding large segments of the American public have accepted their program in the name of patriotism and as one means of defense against communism."²¹

The failure of the nation's communications media, Nelson continues, to give full reports on textbook controversies and

pressure groups has permitted censorship activities to flourish with little organized opposition. If newspapers, television and radio can be called delinquent in their responsibilities, so can many school administrators, teachers, and publishers. As a matter of fact, among the publishers there has been such a noticeable lack of cooperation in meeting the attacks that in some cases book salesmen have taken advantage of unfounded attacks on a competitor's texts to increase the sales of their own firm's publications. Authors and publishers, whom one might expect to be the first line of defense, seem to have decided that disaction is the better part of valor. The authors of books under attack have said very little in reply to their critics, and their silence is apparently dictated by the publishers. This being the situation, it may be fortunate that on February 1, 1962 the Council of the American Library Association passed a resolution giving practical advice to teachers, librarians and administrators regarding ways and means of resisting censorship.

"Libraries of all sizes and types", states the resolution, "have been under increasing pressures from persons who wish to use the library as an instrument of their own tastes and views. Such individuals and groups are demanding the exclusion or removal of books to which they object or the inclusion of a higher proportion of books that support their views. Similar attacks have been made on schools in connection with books used in their programs. In view of this fact, it seems desirable to set forth a few basic principles that may help librarians, trustees, and school administrators in pre-

serving the freedom and professional integrity of their institutions

"Every library or school should take certain measures to clarify its policies and establish its community relations. These steps should be taken without regard to any attack or prospect of attack. They will put the institution in a firm and clearly defined position if its books policies are ever called into question.

"As a normal operating procedure, every library, and the administration responsible for it, should establish certain principles.

1. There should be a definite book selection policy. This should be in written form and approved by the board of trustees, the school board, or other administrative authority. It should be stated clearly and should be understood by members of the staff. This policy should apply to other materials equally, i.e., films, records, magazines, and pamphlets.

2. A file recording the basis for decision should be kept for titles likely to be questioned or apt to be considered controversial.

3. There should be a clearly defined method for handling complaints. Any complaint should be required to be in writing, and the complainant should be identified properly before the complaint is considered. Action should be deferred until full consideration by appropriate administrative authority.

4. There should be continuing efforts to establish lines of communication to assure mutual understanding with civic, religious, educational, and political bodies.

5. Newspapers of the community should be informed of policies governing book selection and use. Purposes and services of the library should be interpreted through a continuing public relations program, as should the use of books in the school.

6. Participation in local civic organizations and in community affairs is desirable. The library and the school are key centers of the community; the librarian and school administrator should be known publicly as community leaders.

"If an attack does come, remember the following:

1. Remain calm. Don't confuse noise with substance.

2. Take immediate steps to assure that the full facts surrounding a complaint are known to the administration. The school librarian should go through the principal to the superintendent and the school board. Full, written information should be presented, giving the nature of the problem or complaint and identifying the source.

3. Seek the support of the local press immediately. The freedom to read and the freedom of the press go hand in hand.

4. Inform local civic organizations of the facts and enlist their support where possible.

5. Defend the principles of the freedom to read and the professional responsibility of teachers and librarians rather than the individual book. The laws governing obscenity, subversive

material, and other questionable matter are subject to interpretation by the courts. The responsibility for removal of any book from public access should rest with this established process. The responsibility for the use of books in the schools must rest with those responsible for the educational objectives being served.

6. The ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee and other appropriate national and state committees concerned with intellectual freedom should be informed of the nature of the problem. Even though each effort at censorship must be met at the local level, there is often value in the support and assistance of agencies outside the area which have no personal involvement."²¹

WHETHER or not attempts at censorship in the schools will let up in years to come is understandably impossible to predict. We do not know what the political climate will be; we do not know what the moral climate will be; we do not know whether the American public will have a better understanding of the problem.

We do know, however, that with the help of more and more books on the subject of censorship and publications such as the *Library Bill of Rights*, the *Freedom to Read Statement*, and the statement on *How Libraries and Schools Can Resist Censorship*, school administrators, teachers and librarians ought to be able to stand up to their destructive critics. Rather than capitulate or impose self-censorship as they have done in too many cases, let them make it impossible for any future study to reach the conclusion that public pressure for censorship of books and magazines appears to be a "prominent part of school life" as it did in Wisconsin recently.²² Let them not be afraid of the Mrs. Jane Alexanders who said she might charge the trustees of the Sequoia Union High School District, California, with contributing to the delinquency of minors for having the *Dictionary of American Slang* in the six schools under its jurisdiction.²³ Let them remember that if pressure groups rather than qualified educators are allowed to determine the content of books, teaching in American schools will degenerate into indoctrination. The antidote to authoritarianism is not some form of American authoritarianism. The antidote is free inquiry.

¹ *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom*, v. 12, no. 2, March, 1963, p. 17-28.

² *Ibid.*, v. 12, no. 5, September, 1963, p. 57-68.

³ *Ibid.*, v. 11, no. 2, July, 1962, p. 1-8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 12, no. 1, January, 1963, p. 1-16.

⁵ Nelson, Jack. *The Censors and the Schools*. New York, Little, Brown, 1963.

⁶ Blanshard, Paul. *The Right to Read; the Battle against Censorship*. Boston, Beacon, 1955.

⁷ Gellhorn, Walter. *Individual Freedom and*

Governmental Restraint. Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1956.

⁸ Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty; Representative Government; the Subjection of Women*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1933.

⁹ Quoted in an article by Everett T. Moore, "A Dangerous Way of Life." *Illinois Libraries*, v. 46, no. 3, March, 1964, p. 165-174.

¹⁰ Moore, Everett T. "A Dangerous Way of Life." *Illinois Libraries*, v. 46, no. 3, March, 1964, p. 165-174.

¹¹ Jennison, Peter. "Freedom to Read." *Public Affairs Pamphlet*, no. 344, 1963.

¹² Castagna, Edwin. "Courage and Cowardice." *Library Journal*, v. 88, no. 3, February, 1963, p. 501-506.

¹³ Fiske, Marjorie. *Book Selection and Censorship*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1959.

¹⁴ Braden, Thomas. "Trouble with Censorship." *California Librarian*, v. 24, no. 4, October, 1963, p. 235-238.

¹⁵ Alexander, Albert. "The Gray Flannel Cover on the American History Textbooks." *Social Education*, v. 24, no. 1, January, 1960, p. 11-14.

¹⁶ Quoted in an article by Fred M. Hechinger, "High School History Textbooks Play It Safe by Avoiding Tough Issues." *New York Times*, February 14, 1960, p. E-9.

¹⁷ Krug, Mark M. "Safe Textbooks and Citi-

zenship Education." *School Review*, v. 68, no. 4, Winter, 1960, p. 463-480.

¹⁸ *Library Bill of Rights*. Adopted June 18, 1948 and amended February 1, 1961 by the Council of the American Library Association.

¹⁹ *Freedom to Read Statement*. Prepared by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, May 2-3, 1953.

²⁰ Gaines, Ervin J. "Intellectual Freedom." *A.L.A. Bulletin*, v. 57, no. 3, October, 1963, p. 317-318.

²¹ *How Libraries and Schools Can Resist Censorship*. Adopted February 1, 1962 by the Council of the American Library Association.

²² Burrell, Lee. "Censorship Pressures on Wisconsin Public Schools." *Education Digest*, v. 29, no. 5, January, 1964, p. 17-20.

²³ *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom*, v. 13, no. 1, January, 1964, p. 13-24.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL BY MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY *H. Bush and W. H. McAdams* TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U. S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

